Literature.

British Almanac and Companion for 1844.—London, Charles Knight & Co.

We have before devoted a portion of our space to a notice of the "Companion," but were obliged to dismiss the notice of the part assigned to public improvements in too hurried a manner. Besides recapitulating, as we did on the former occasion, the list of illustrations, of which we are enabled to speak favourably, we shall now say a word as to the way in which the notices are given, or of what they consist, so that our readers may be guided in their choice of a year-book, suited, as we may venture to say this is, in a particular manner to their wants. Under the head, therefore, of public improvements, we have the British Museum glanced at by way of anticipation of the period of its completion; the writer, however, will find out his mistake in assigning that to the ensuing summer, for it must of necessity be much longer before we can look for the finish of so extensive a work as the entire façade. The Houses of Parliament are described both as to their present point of progress, and the features that are beginning to be revealed of the future intention. It is made out pretty clearly that the Royal Palace, as the buildings are to be designated, are likely to extend to some treble or quadruple the amount of cost and extent that was at first anticipated. The alteration of the bridge, the embankments, roads, terraces, and extensions, and streets, that are to be the consequence, and to be brought into connection with this great work, are brought into view, and a slight detail of the decoration, and of the grander features of the structure, concludes the interest of this paragraph.

The *Royal Exchange* is next brought under notice, described and slightly criticised. Of the portico as much is said as its superiority over the rest of the edifice justifies; but of the whole, it is an odd remark to say, that "*purity of style is evidently not aimed at.*" What defence may be set up for this neglect of aim it were hard to divine, for we are well assured that something like "purity of style" was within the reach of the authorities, had they cared about its possession. However, we suppose the wonderful civic wisdom, that with *little thrift* chuckled within itself at securing a few paltry shop rents from the ground-story to the street, will feel itself thus amply compensated for the loss of "purity of style."

The Gresham Hall, by Mr. C. Smith; The Alfred Life Office; and the new line of Cateaton-street, and those in connection with it, are next adverted to, and some very judicious remarks made in reference thereto. Twenty-two pages, in short, are occupied by the same character of summary, over which we cannot further travel. It will not be objected to us, however, if we transfer from it the following well-deserved tribute to a work that has been neglected even by ourselves: it is the screen enclosure of the Marquis of Westminster's mansion, of which it says:—

"One piece of design which claims notice from us, if only as being of unusual character, and a particularly striking object in a part of the town where architectural display seems to be rather avoided than at all aimed at, is the *Screen* in front of the Marquis of Westminster's mansion in Grosvenor-street. It consists of an open colonnade, of the Roman-Doric order, and of seven inter-columns, connecting two arched carriage entrances, with open-work bronzed gates of very rich design. The order is raised upon a stylobate, between four and five feet high, on which are placed candelabra standards for gas-burners, between the columns. This work does credit to its architect, Mr. T. Cundy: it is elegant and picturesque, and a very great improvement upon Holland's screen at Carlton House; like to which, it is subject to censure, inasmuch as the columns support nothing—but their own entablature. Here the colonnade at least serves to connect the gateways; and it forms a pleasing object, not only from the street, but also as seen from the house itself. The great drawback upon its effect in the street view is, that so far from being in a corresponding style, the front of the house makes no pretension to style or design, and forms a very mean architectural background to the screen."

A ROMAN VILLA.

The Roman Villa was divided into three parts: the *Urbana*, for the master and family; the *Rustica*, for the farmer and husbandman; and the *Fructuaria*, or storehouse for corn, wine, and oil. The servants who were immediately attendant upon the master, and belonged to the *Villa Urbana*, were the *Atriences*, or what the Italians call *Sala*, in speaking of the livery-servants collectively; the valets, *Cubiculari*, who, it is presumed, were usually freedmen; the secretary, styled *Notarius*; the gardeners for the pleasure-grounds, *Topiarii*; and the musicians and comedians, and persons for entertainment during repast. This *Villa Urbana*, also denominated *Pseudo Urbana*, and *Pretorium*, from obvious distinction, had a peristyle or court surrounded by a portico, at the further extremity of which, opposite to the gate of the entrance, was the *Atrium*, or hall, with a portico on each side, looking towards the place of exercise—as lawns, galleries for wrestling, and other smaller buildings. The baths were also annexed to this part, and were always so situated as to receive the winter's setting sun. Besides the sitting-rooms, chambers, library, and eating-room, they would often have one of the latter in the midst of the park, as we should call it, and sometimes a bed-room, for the sake of quiet and retirement.

In the *Villa Rustica*, or farm-house, in apartments over the gateway, lived the *Procurator*, or steward, that he might know who went in or out; on one side of this, the *Villicus*, bailiff, or chief of the husbandmen, and near the *Fructuaria*, or store-rooms, the *Villica*, or housekeeper, under whose care were the female servants, employed in providing food and clothing for the family. The inferior slaves lodged in one great room, and the sick in an apartment called the *Valetudinarium*. The lodgings of the freedmen had a southern aspect. The *Aviarius* had the care of the poultry; and in considerable villas, far from a town, was a master of the workmen, with smiths and carpenters under him. Horses and mules were kept for the use of the master, and asses and oxen for the farm, which had yards much resembling the modern. Particular care was taken of the geese, hens, pigeons, peacocks, and other birds, who had separate dwellings assigned to them; and not only deer, hares, and every kind of game was attended to, but there can scarcely be named an animal which was not kept by the more opulent Romans at their country seats.

The villa was also divided into a winter and summer house, because it had a suite of rooms adapted to either season. The parts which composed the summer residence were nearly the same as those of the town, except that the dwelling apartments, which did not commonly exceed one story, were always surmounted by a tower, on the top of which was a room pierced with windows on every side, uniformly destined for meals, so that they could add to the pleasures of the table those of light and prospect.

The Romans generally built their villas on the high roads, for two reasons—to get to them more easily, and to place them more in sight. In the Pompeian paintings we have villas of this kind. One on the sea-shore, of two stories, has trees planted on the roof.

Hints for Tenants.—While examining the fire-places of a house, it is necessary to observe if the hearth-slabs are very narrow: if they are, the chimney-pieces are probably of an inferior description. Marble chimney-pieces should be carefully looked to, as it frequently happens that they are contracted for at some incredibly small sum compared with their appearance, and put together with old marble, the stains in which often become visible again when they have been some time exposed to the heat of the fire. The sides or profiles, the slips, and the soffits, or under sides of the shelves, are often not more than one-fourth of an inch thick, and sometimes they are even less than that. It is important that the tenant should carefully examine all these matters; as, should the chimney-pieces fail, and become dilapidated, he will be called upon by his landlord to restore them to a sound state and condition, at an expense, most likely, greater than their first cost. Attention should also be directed to the fastenings, which are often of a cheap and inferior description, and thus become a source of continual annoyance, from the locks getting out of order, and the bars, bolts, &c., not acting properly.

MONUMENT TO ADMIRAL BENBOW.

A beautiful memorial has been placed in St. Mary's Church, Shrewsbury, to the memory of this gallant admiral, whose actions have eminently distinguished him in the naval annals of British history as an intrepid sailor and brave hero. The inscription tablet forms the base, above which, and between two pilasters, supporting a pediment, with a small shield in the centre, is a beautiful representation, in *basso relievo*, of the celebrated "Benbow frigate," in full chase of the enemy, and pouring a broadside into another vessel, the stern of which is visible amid clouds of smoke in the distance; the foam of the ocean, and other minute details, being cut with extraordinary fidelity. Over this rises a pyramid of black marble, on which is a fine medallion bust of the admiral in *alto relievo*. The sail of a ship, supported by a yard-arm, appears gracefully suspended over the bust, the lower portion of which, on one side, being entwined round the fluke of an anchor; the corresponding one having a cannon, with the muzzle resting on a cluster of balls. The design and execution reflect credit on the taste and style of the sculptor, Mr. Evan Thomas, F.S.A., of London, a native, we believe, of Wales.—*From Eddowes's Journal for Shropshire.*

ARCHITECTURAL DECEPTION.

Architecture produces its effect upon the mind as much as upon the eye. Its forms are understood by the intellect, not merely painted on the retina. The pleasures which it excites arise from complicated sources; they spring from the thoughts which we bestow upon the object, and not merely from the contemplation of the form. This assertion may be easily exemplified. A building which we *know* to be constructed of Canada deals and cast-iron pipes, daubed with "lithic paint" or "patent mastic," will never please us as much as if it were raised of freestone. The lines may have the same elegance, but we cannot disjoin the ideas of grandeur and of durability; and the notion of the instability and slightness of the flimsy edifice derogates from its consequence. Besides which, when we look at a building, we are gratified by considering the labour and skill of its construction. We like to see the firm and regular courses of well-squared stone, the shaft compacted with the capital, the wedge stones balancing each other in the arch; but when the materials pretend to form a part which does not belong to their nature, then we are offended by the deception, at least we receive but very small proportion of the pleasure which their *forms* would have given if executed in the genuine substance. Every deception in architecture becomes a blemish which the mind does not pardon. Windows which exclude the light; doors which cannot be opened; twisted columns which could not stand beneath their superstructure; columns bearing nothing; passages leading to nothing; are imperfections which are obvious to the most inattentive or uneducated observer. They are deformities, because they are of no use; otherwise the idle imposts or columns, which please when properly applied, would have as much inherent beauty—so far as beauty depends upon form—in one situation as in another.

Ancient British Brass Foundry at Rayne.—There have lately been found under the bottom of a deep ditch in Rayne, a number of celts, and parts of spear-heads, in bronze, evidently ancient British, together with a quantity of copper ore; the celts (heads of a sort of battle-axe) are of various sizes, and all more or less injured, and, with the fragments of spear-heads, amounted to 18 in number; the celts had originally all been cast in different moulds; and I can form no other idea of the intention of making the collection now discovered than that it was to melt the whole down and re-cast the materials into new warlike implements. I have been permitted to retain 11 out of 18 pieces brought me; the others are intended for presentation to the Walden Museum.—*Spanish Paper.*

New Barracks at Fulwood.—Under the able and active superintendence of Mr. John Bosworth, clerk of the works, and Mr. Adamson, manager for the contractors, Messrs. Bellhouse, of Manchester, these barracks are getting on with celerity, and are already beginning to exhibit a very imposing appearance.

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